

HURRICANE MITCH RECONSTRUCTION UPDATE



USAID/Nicaragua Hurricane Mitch Reconstruction Program

(U.S. Millions of Dollars)	\$103.6
Public Health	30.6
Economic Reactivation	53.5
Disaster Mitigation	6.6
Education	4.5
Municipal Infrastructure	2.9
Transparency and Accountability	1.0
Food Aid	4.5



Departments of Nicaragua
Affected by Hurricane Mitch

FOOD FOR WORK HELPS FAMILIES AFFECTED BY DROUGHT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

El Paragua, Nicaragua—At about 11:30 a.m., Felix Maribel Morales drops off her daughter at a neighbor before going to work. It's about a half hour walk along a deeply rutted, muddy road to reach the road repair job site where 21-year-old Morales will dig ditches and haul rocks the rest of the afternoon. For her labor, Morales will receive rations of rice, beans, corn-soy blend cereal and cooking oil—for which she is extremely thankful.

"We lost our entire corn crop in the drought and we were left with nothing," said Morales. "With these food rations my family has something to eat."

Morales is not alone in her plight. Everyone in this rural community, located 90 miles northwest of Managua in the department of Leon,



Anselmo Delgadillo lost his crop during the drought. A USAID/Save the Children Food for Work program is providing food for his family until the next harvest.

lost crops during a drought at the beginning of the planting season. The drought, along with a coffee crisis that created high unemployment, left thousands of families throughout the country with no income and little to nothing to eat.

In response to the emergency, USAID is supplying \$6 million worth of food, donated by the U.S. government, to more than 50,000 families, many of whom are still recovering from the affects of the October 1998 Hurricane Mitch. The food donations will be distributed through the next harvest in late November 2001 under "Food for Work" activities. The U.S. government's drought emergency assistance also included \$175,000 for the purchase of improved seeds and fertilizers, which were immediately distributed to farmers to help insure

(Continued on page 2)



Residents of El Paragua, affected by the drought, receive food rations for working on community improvement projects such as this road repair.

With USAID funding, Save the Children is working in 229 communities affected by drought in the northwestern departments of Leon and Chinandega. Under Save the Children's Food For Work program, 2,813 families are receiving monthly food allotments ...

FOOD FOR WORK...



Melania del Socorro Calderon says the Food for Work program benefits her family and the community.

(Continued from page 1)

crops for the next planting cycle.

USAID recently approved an additional \$300,000 to purchase corn, beans, rice, seeds and fertilizers from local Nicaraguan businesses. The food and agricultural supplies are being distributed to 2,654 additional families in the northwestern area of the department of Chinandega. Along with helping these families, the purchase of commodities from local businesses stimulates the Nicaraguan economy.

In the Food for Work program, residents in drought and high unemployment areas and communities still recovering from the affects of the October 1998 Hurricane Mitch participate in community improvement projects in exchange for food. The projects include road upgrades, soil conservation, reforestation activities and building water conservation structures for flood control and irrigation. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided \$100,000 worth of tools needed to perform the various

activities under the program.

The Food for Work program is implemented by USAID's partners including Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the Cooperative League of the United States of America (CLUSA), the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), Save the Children, Project Concern International (PCI), and World Relief.

With USAID funding, Save the Children is working in 229 communities affected by drought in the northwestern departments of Leon and Chinandega. Under Save the Children's Food For Work program, 2,813 families are receiving monthly food allotments of 44 lbs of rice, 44 lbs. of beans, 27 lbs. of corn-soy blend cereal and one gallon of cooking oil.

In the community of El Paragua, 15 people are participating in the three-month Food for Work program under the direction of Save The Children. Anselmo Delgadillo is another member of the community who lost his first harvest from the drought. This is not the first time that Delgadillo has suffered losses. Hurricane Mitch destroyed not only his crops, but his home as well. The USAID Food For Work program is



Unemployed coffee farm workers repair roads in exchange for food through a Catholic Relief Services/USAID Food For Work program.



Many women are participating in USAID's emergency Food for Work Program. Families receive rice, beans, corn-soy blend cereal and cooking oil through the program.

providing food for his family of eight until he harvests his next corn crop.

The 22 participants in another USAID/Save The Children Food For Work program, in the community of Miraflores, are repairing roads and reforesting river embankments. Melania del Socorro Calderon said the project has a double benefit.

"It helps feed my family of six after we lost our corn crop and improves the community," said Calderon.

Food for Work programs are also helping families in the northern departments of Matagalpa and Jinotega. While these areas were not affected by the drought, a drop in international coffee prices produced a crisis in that sector that bankrupted farms and left many people unemployed.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is assisting more than 800 families in 14 communities in the coffee growing department of Matagalpa through the USAID-funded Food for Work program. Before the program, desperate, without a job or income, some people planted themselves along the main

highway in the area to beg for handouts from passing vehicles. Now, most of these people have returned to their communities and are participating in the USAID Food for Work program.

Residents of El Naranjo were among the people who had camped out on the highway.

"Necessity forced us to do it," said Jose Santos Amaya. "We couldn't bear the hunger any longer."

Amaya is now a leader in El Naranjo, helping to organize the community improvement activities of the USAID/CRS Food for Work program that is benefiting 120 families. Residents are building curbsides and filling potholes along the same highway where they had recently camped. For many El Naranjo residents, this is the first job and regular supply of food they have had since last January, when coffee prices plummeted and they were left without work.

Paola Rodriguez, one of the participants in the program, lost her job when the coffee grower she worked for couldn't afford to pay anyone.

(Continued on page 4)



While most of the food donations come from the United States, the U.S. government allocated an additional \$300,000 to purchase local commodities, which will benefit the Nicaraguan economy.

Food for Work programs are also helping families in the northern departments of Matagalpa and Jinotega. While these areas were not affected by the drought, a severe drop in international coffee prices produced a crisis in that sector that bankrupted farms and left many people unemployed.

FOOD FOR WORK...

(Continued from page 3)

"If I didn't have the food from this program, I don't know how my children would have survived," said Rodriguez, a single mother of six children.

The Cooperative League of the United States of America (CLUSA) has set up an innovative program with USAID funding that helps an additional 800 unemployed coffee workers and their families, and at the same time benefits coffee producers. Participants in the CLUSA program are employed on private farms and receive partial payment from the owners and food allotments from USAID to make up the difference. The reduced wages allows coffee growers to employ more workers than they could have, given their current losses. At the same time, the workers receive a small salary and enough food for their families.

At the Chocolata coffee farm, owner Sofia Sequeira agreed to take on an additional 15 workers who had lost their jobs on other farms. The workers receive a partial wage from Sequeira and food rations from the USAID/CLUSA project.

Before she got temporary work on Sequeira's farm through the USAID/CLUSA program, Lucia Salmeron camped out on the highway for two months, living on handouts. The coffee farm where she had worked for the last eight years could not afford to keep her.

"I had no money and no food," said Salmeron. "I felt so



Felix Maribel Morales is able to feed her family through the USAID drought plan.

abandoned."

Salmeron said she is very grateful to Sequiera and to the program for giving her a chance to work. Meanwhile, Sequeira has been able to make improvements on her farm with the extra employees.

The CLUSA program also benefits a group of 198 small coffee growers in the community of Peñas

Blancas, who are receiving food rations to work on their own farms. Many small producers, hurt the most by the drop in coffee prices, abandoned the upkeep of their farms to search for work to feed their families. When they couldn't find work, they camped out on the highway to wait for help.

"It reached the point where we could only feed our kids a plantain with salt," said Flor de Maria Ubeda.

Now, with the USAID food program, the people of Peñas Blancas are back working on their farms.

Said Ubeda: "The future is unsure but at least for now we are eating."



Lucia Salmeron camped on the highway, living on handouts, until the USAID/CLUSA Food for Work program secured her temporary employment at a private coffee farm.

USAID Drought Plan

Emergency Drought Funds: \$6 million

Improved Seeds and Fertilizers: \$175,000

USDA Tools: \$100,000

Additional Funding For Local Commodity Purchases: \$300,000

Total: \$6.6 million

Beneficiaries: 50,000 families



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